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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious Lord, whose glory has been revealed through the generations, renew within our Senators a true understanding of Your purpose for their lives, for our Nation, and for our world. Amid the challenges of our time, infuse them with a spirit of wisdom and courage so that they will be instruments of Your providence. Lord, use them to make an impact on the lives of the forgotten who lack hope and on all people who seek Your presence. May Your grace, mercy, and peace be on us all now and stay with each one of us always.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, October 12, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLI-

BRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, the Senate will begin consideration of the free-trade agreements. There are three of them. There will be up to 12 hours of debate on these matters. The Senate will have its normal recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. today for our caucus meetings. We expect to yield back some of the time—I certainly hope so—on the trade agreements, although people can speak as much as they want on these matters. But we are going to complete the action tonight. Whether it is at 4 o'clock or midnight, we are going to complete action on these bills today. The House is awaiting our action.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 2681

Mr. REID. Madam President, H.R. 2681 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the title of the bill for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2681) to provide additional time for the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to issue achievable standards for cement manufacturing facilities, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I would object to any further proceedings at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar under rule XIV.

AMERICAN JOBS ACT

Mr. REID. Madam President, Republican obstructionism was once again in evidence last night, and it has cost this Nation millions of jobs.

Last night, Republicans blocked the American Jobs Act, President Obama's plan to create 2 million jobs by giving tax cuts to businesses and middle-class families and investing in modern roads, bridges, and schools.

It is not the first jobs bill they have blocked this Congress, although I hope it will be the last. But it seems as if the Republicans do not really want to put Americans back to work. They believe a weak economy means a weak President. So even though they have supported each piece of the American Jobs Act in the past, they blocked this job-creating legislation in the hopes of doing political damage to the President.

But we have not given up on creating jobs in America, and we will not let Republican political games stand between Congress's most important duty: to put 14 million Americans back to work.

Passing the American Jobs Act would have been a step in the right direction. Economists of every stripe agree it would have impacted the economy immediately and put up to 2 million people back to work.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's and economic adviser to Senator JOHN MCCAIN's Presidential campaign said this:

Given the high odds of another recession in the next few months, it is vital for Congress and the administration to provide some near-term support to the economy.

Zandi says the American Jobs Act could shave a percentage point off the unemployment rate. Conversely, he warned that without immediate action

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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